

She is shunned as a creature of ill omen. Inasmuch as girls are married at five or six, all this may happen to a child of ten or twelve, if her husband dies, although she never has lived with him. In 1856 the English made a law by which widows might remarry, but the higher classes very rarely allow it. If they do allow it, the groom is forced to marry a tree or a doll of cotton, so that he too may be widowed. The mores resist any change which is urged, although not enforced, by people of other mores. The reforms proposed in the treatment of widows have no footing at all in the experience and the judgment of Hindoos, if we except a few theists in Calcutta, and they have never taken a united and consistent position. Monier-Williams * describes the case of a man who married a widow. He was boycotted so completely that all human fellowship was denied him. He had to go to a distant place and take a position under the government. Among the lower castes of the Bihari Hindoos a widow may marry the younger brother of her deceased husband, to whom her relation is always one of especial intimacy and familiarity.²

408. Difficulty of reform. It appears that the difficulty about the remarriage of widows is due to the fact that it runs counter to fundamental religious ideas. The Hindoo reformers are charged with using forms of wedding ceremony which are inconsistent with facts. Some widows are virgins, but there is not always a father or mother to give them away by the formula of "virgin gift." The women all have a notion, taken from the words of a heroine in the Mahabharata, that a woman can be given but once.³ They cling to the literal formula. By the form of first marriage also a woman passes into the kin of her

husband for
 seven births (generations), the limit of degrees of
 consanguinity.
 It is irreligious and impossible to change the kin
 again, because
 consequences have been entailed which run seven
 generations
 into the future.⁴ This is all made to depend, not on
 the consum-
 mation of the marriage, but on the wedding or
 even betrothal.
 The census shows that the taboo on the
 remarriage of widows
 and the custom of child marriage extend and
 increase together.⁵

1 *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, 472.

* JASB, VI, 376.

2 JASB, VI, 119.
61.

⁸ Cf. sec. 376.

⁵ Jolly, *Recht und Sitte*,